Literacy B.C. NEWSLETTER

May 1996 Volume 2, Number 1

WALK FOR LITERACY

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

June 9, 1996

Courtenay, Parksville,

Vancouver, and Whitehorse

On Sunday, June 9, 1996 people in communities in B.C. and the Yukon will walk to raise funds in support of local literacy programs and learners. They will also walk to raise awareness about literacy.

If you live in Courtenay, Parksville, Vancouver, or Whitehorse join the Walk for Literacy on June 9 at 1:00 p.m. Call Literacy B.C. and we will put you in touch with your local walk organizers.
Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Turn the page for more information about the Walk . . .

Step by Step for Literacy

Carol Bossio and Ingrid Braathen

In 1994 Carol Bossio organized the first Walk for Literacy in Parksville, B.C. One hundred people walked to raise money to support The Write Place, where Carol had learned to read and write.

In 1995 Carol connected with Ingrid Braathen, a learner at the Adult Learning Centre in Courtenay. That year, both Carol and Ingrid organized walks in their communities.

The Walk for Literacy has now become an annual event and spread to other communities in B.C. and the Yukon.

Carol and Ingrid received a grant from the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) to write a book about the Walk for Literacy. *Walk for Literacy: A Step in the Right Direction* is a step by step guide to organizing a walk. The book was distributed to over 100 literacy organizations across the country this spring.

To request a copy of the book, contact Literacy B.C.:

Phone: 1-800-663-1293
Fax: (604) 684-8520

For further information about the Walk for Literacy, contact Carol and Ingrid at:

Community Adult Literacy and Learning Society
P.O. Box 3417
Courtenay, B.C. V9N 5N5
Phone/Fax: 338-9906

See the next page for an interview with Carol and Ingrid about the Walk for Literacy . . .

An interview with Carol Bossio and Ingrid Braathen on the Walk for Literacy.

What motivated you to start the Walk for Literacy?

Carol: I wanted to give something back to The Write Place because they had changed my life and yet they constantly had to worry about getting funds. I also wanted my community to understand what The Write Place was doing for adults who have difficulty reading and writing. Because I felt so alone all my life, awareness about literacy was one of my most important motivations.

Ingrid: When I first met Carol I realized we had the same dream. I had just finished my upgrading program and I felt like I'd found life. I wanted to give back to the Centre what was given to me and to let others know that the Centre was there to help.

Why did you write the book?

Carol: Once Ingrid and I connected it motivated both of us to spread the walk across Canada. We wrote the book to inspire other learners and to let them know that if we can do it, so can they.

Ingrid: For years I thought I was nothing and all of a sudden here I was organizing a walk and talking to MLA's and business people. I wanted everybody to know what the walk could do.

How did you design the book?

Carol: The most important thing to us was that it be easy to read and in plain language because this book is for learners. We didn't put any page numbers in the book because sometimes people have trouble with numbers. So we colour coordinated the different sections and all the colours represent a rainbow. We have every colour in the rainbow in the book and the cover represents the sky.

Ingrid: Everything in the book means something. There are footprints on each page of the book but the footprints aren't filled in. That's because when we start out we're dealing with our disability and we're scared. But as we keep learning, our footprints become more solid because then we're walking with confidence. The footprints on every page represent the steps we take in our struggle to learn, and they also represent the steps to take in creating a walk. Each time you turn a page, you see the next step.

Tell us your dream.

Carol: Our dream is to have every community in Canada walk for literacy at the same time on the same day each year. It will be like holding hands across the country and spreading the message together.

Ingrid: I know the spark and the fire and the commitment that's in me. It's going to happen. 🕮

Meet Erna Barwich, Learner Advocate

Erna Barwich is a strong advocate for learners. She has brought her learner's voice to the Boards of Literacy B.C. and the Movement for Canadian Literacy. Among her many other contributions, Erna has helped to plan two provincial Learners' Conferences and has often represented learners' issues and concerns to government and the public.

This fall, Erna will retire from the Literacy B.C. Board after serving for four years. We have found Erna to be a deeply committed and caring person with a love of learning and a drive to help others. She has made a valuable and important contribution to our organization and we will miss her very much.

Erna Barwich with
Senator Joyce Fairbairn,
Minister with Special Responsibility
for Literacy
Literacy Action Day
Ottawa, February 16, 1995

Earlier this month, Erna gave a speech at a learner's event at the University College of the Fraser Valley in Chilliwack. This is part of her speech.

All my life I wanted to learn, learn, learn and I still do. I come from a family of six siblings. Today I am the only one alive. World War II uprooted and separated our family. We moved from Russia to West Germany to Paraguay and then to Canada. This interrupted much of my education and definitely did not enhance my self-esteem.

In February 1961 I joined my sister in Canada. When I landed in Vancouver I was greeted by a cold climate, strange people and a difficult language. But after a short time I found work and things started to look up again. My sister had promised me that in Canada I would have greater opportunities to continue my education.

In April 1961 my sister and her family had a car accident. It was fatal for my sister. Those were very difficult days and months.

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In December 1961 I married my brother-in-law. I took over three little boys and together we had three more boys. I'll tell you there was never a dull moment.

After our youngest went to high school I dared to look for help to read and write in English. Since I could read and communicate some, what I needed to learn was how to think and spell in English.

One day in 1989 I had the courage to go to Fraser Valley College. After I filled out the questionnaire for the ABE program, they told me they did not have a place for me. I could not believe what I was hearing. It was like a cold slap in my face. Here I was sitting in an institution and I was told there was nothing available for me. At that moment my survival instinct surfaced. I said I would not move until they found something for me. Sometimes I surprise myself with my boldness. What I did not understand then was that my skills were not sufficient for the ABE program.

I phoned Barbara Bate at the college and her friendly, inviting voice gave me courage again. I was matched up with a wonderful tutor, Gail Newby, who helped me every step of the way. She was the first one to teach me how to write a cheque. It was quite an emotional experience.

The following year I entered the ABE program with great anticipation and excitement. I found it very challenging to fit into the Canadian school system. But, thanks to every instructor that I had, I progressed. Although I was a slow learner, I was an eager student who worked very hard and I learned to listen. Not only did I hear what instructors said, but I gave it my very best. I was the first student to start with a tutor and go all the way to write my GED and pass.

Today I cannot say that I went out there and got a great job, made lots of money, and have a wonderful position. But I can say that I became a good advocate for learners. 🕮

Congratulations, Brenda Lee Giles!

Brenda Lee Giles, a Board member of Literacy B.C., was recently awarded a Vancouver Community College Alumni Association Scholarship. The scholarship rewards leadership and/or outstanding effort in working to improve academic and extracurricular campus life.

The award citation reads: *Although Brenda could barely read or write when she came to King Edward Campus in 1992, she has proven to be a serious, dedicated student and has advanced to Grade 11 English and Grade 10 Math. She is an outspoken literacy advocate and the model of a true, self-directed adult learner.*

Learners, Take Note

Are You Looking for a Pen Pal?

Learners at Project Literacy Victoria want to write to other learners in B.C. literacy programs. If you are a learner who would like a pen pal, write to Vicky Austin at Project Literacy Victoria and tell her about yourself. Vicky will match you with a pen pal from Project Literacy Victoria. Write to:

Vicky Austin
Project Literacy Victoria
830 E. Pembroke Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8T 1H9
Phone: 381-3755
Fax: 381-4911

The World Wide Web Wants Your Writing!

The National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) has a page on the Internet's World Wide Web to showcase learners' writings. Every week the page features a new story written by an adult learner in Canada.

If you have a story to put on the World Wide Web send it to Literacy B.C. We will forward your story to NALD.

Send your story, with a photo and some information about yourself, to:

Literacy B.C.
622 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
Fax: 684-8520

Superior Propane Learner Award

As part of its support for literacy and the PGI Golf Tournament, Superior Propane is once again providing a $200 Learner Award. Every year the award is given to an adult learner who is currently attending and planning to continue in a literacy program. The winner is chosen by a committee of adult learners.

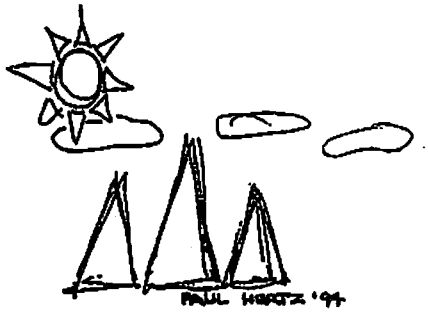
To be eligible for the award the learner must:

- have attended a program for at least six months, and preferably a year
- have an excellent attendance record
- obtain a recommendation from a teacher or tutor
- have shown substantial or exceptional progress

The deadline for applications is **June 15, 1996**.

For more information, and to request an application form, contact Literacy B.C. at 1-800-663-1293.

PD for Practitioners



1996 Summer Literacy Institute

A series of professional development workshops will be offered as part of the 1996 Summer Literacy Institute. Literacy B.C. will host the Institute at the University of British Columbia, July 15 - 26, 1996. The Institute is funded by the 1995/96 B.C. literacy cost-shared program.

Registration in each afternoon workshop is $20.

Workshop topics are:

- An overview of the Basic Skills Research Project currently being carried out by HRDC
- An overview of Workplace Basic Skills Education
- Intercultural Communications Issues and Training in the Workplace
- Educating for Change: Community-based Student-Centered Literacy Programming with First Nations Adults

For more information, call Literacy B.C. at 1-800-663-1293.

English at Work: A pilot project linking industry and educators

The construction industry invites adult educators to attend a four day "language at work" workshop.

If you are an instructor or teacher interested in bridging the gap between the classroom and the jobsite, this is an opportunity to put on a hardhat and see what literacy in the workplace is all about. Using workplace simulations, visits to jobsites, and presentations by trades instructors, the workshop will introduce you to the practical, gritty, and often complex language of contracts, code books, and technical manuals.

The workshop runs from July 2 to 5, 1996. Registration is limited to 20 applicants. The registration fee is $150.00.

For more information, contact:

Lynda Fownes
B.C. Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council (SkillPlan)
4303 Canada Way
Burnaby, B.C.
V5G 1J3
Phone: 436-1126
Fax: 437-7539

Upcoming Events

Play a Round for Literacy!

The PGI Golf Tournament
Thursday, July 11
University Golf Club, Vancouver

This year's PGI is hosted by Bob Robertson and Linda Cullen of **Double Exposure**, CBC Radio's award winning comedy duo.

The 1996 PGI will be as much fun as always with music, special on-course activities, and lots of great prizes - for duffers and serious golfers!

The tournament fee is $175 which includes a golf gift, prizes, lunch, and dinner. Tax receipts will be issued and all proceeds will benefit Literacy B.C.

To register call Literacy B.C. at 1-800-663-1293.

PGI National Sponsors

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Take 5 and READ!
International Literacy Day
September 8, 1996

The **Take 5 and READ** special promotion is planned for September 8, 1996, International Literacy Day!

Once again, Literacy B.C. will be providing International Literacy Day kits which will help you promote literacy in your community. The kit will include Take 5 and READ posters and bookmarks, ideas for special events, and other useful information.

The kits will be mailed in mid-August to literacy groups and instructors in B.C.

For more information, and to make sure you are on the mailing list to receive a kit, call Literacy B.C. at 1-800-663-1293.

Resources

The Tutor's Toolbox

This small field guide presents 25 useful techniques in literacy and ESL tutoring. It is written as a refresher for persons who are trained as volunteer tutors.

The guide was written by Bill Graham of the College of New Caledonia in Burns Lake, and was funded by the B.C. literacy cost-shared program.

Some of the tutoring techniques described in the guide are: the language experience story; phonics; duet reading; cloze procedure; and spelling anchors.

To request a copy of *The Tutor's Toolbox*, call Literacy B.C. at 1-800-663-1293.

STAPLE™ '96 (Supplemental Training for Alberta Practitioners in Literacy Education)

STAPLE '96 is Canada's first multimedia training program for paid or volunteer adult literacy workers.

The program is sponsored by the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta and funded by the NLS and Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development.

The program is on CD-ROM and includes a handbook. Information is presented through text, audio, animation and interactive exercises. It integrates assessment with instruction through five modules: Introduction to Assessment; Reading Assessment; Teaching Reading; Writing Assessment; and Teaching Writing.

STAPLE '96 is for use with students who have some knowledge of reading and writing.

For more information, contact:

Literacy Coordinators of Alberta
211 RMP, Alberta Vocational College
332 - 6 Ave. SE
Calgary, Alberta T2G 4S6
Phone: (403) 297-4995
Fax: (403) 297-4849

A copy of STAPLE '96 is available on loan from Literacy B.C.

Resources

THE LITERACY MATERIALS
BULLETIN

The spring 1996 issue of the *Literacy Materials Bulletin* contains reviews of a variety of materials including: a job guide; a computer program to help students with rules of grammar; and classic stories rewritten for new readers.

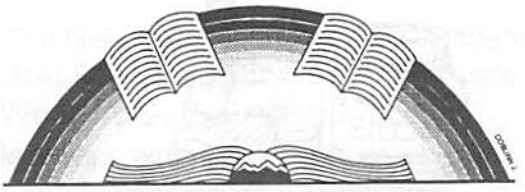
The *Bulletin* is produced by the Literacy Materials Committee, under new chair Helen Thomas. Thomas, an instructor at Victoria READ Society, takes over as chair from Laurie Gould, who produced the previous six issues of the *Bulletin*.

With this issue, the Committee is asking for feedback from readers about what they would like to see in the *Bulletin*. Send your comments and suggestions to:

Helen Thomas, Chair
Literacy Materials Committee
c/o Victoria READ Society
720 Linden Avenue
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 4G7

Copies of *Bulletin* #13, as well as the previous 12 issues, are available from Literacy B.C. Materials recommended in all issues of the *Bulletin* are available on loan from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Come to the Library Series



These four workbooks are guides for adult learners who are thinking about going to the library.

Come to the Library is a project of the B.C. Library Association and was funded by the 1994/95 B.C. literacy cost-shared program.

The books tell learners: how to take out books; who works at the library; how to use the library catalogues; and ways to browse at the library.

Copies of the books are available from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Lawyers for Literacy

Over 3,000 lawyers and law firms in B.C. have received a literacy awareness kit to help them improve communications with their clients.

The *Lawyers for Literacy Awareness Kit* was produced by the Lawyers for Literacy Project, an initiative of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA), B.C. Branch. The Project is funded by the NLS and carries out recommendations of the 1992 CBA Task Force on Legal Literacy.

The Task Force said that lawyers need to increase their awareness of literacy issues and to adjust the way they communicate to fit the reading abilities of their clients.

The kit contains a variety of materials to help lawyers improve client communications by making some basic changes to their practice. Some of the recommendations in the kit include:

- Reduce the number of documents clients have to manage. If documents are needed, help clients to organize them.

- Preview documents orally to give clients a context for what they are reading. Stop to paraphrase what you have said and check that clients understand the information. Ask clients questions and encourage them to ask questions.

- Use computer simulations, audio tapes, or video tapes of court or trial proceedings to prepare clients for court.

- Examine and modify the firm letterhead, advertising, communications, bulletins and newsletter for clarity, legibility, and ease of reading.

The kit contains a literacy audit to help law firms open up discussions on how to improve their communications with clients. The Project also provides in-house training sessions that include assistance with conducting literacy audits.

For more information about the Lawyers for Literacy Project, contact:

Canadian Bar Association
B.C. Branch
10th Floor, 845 Cambie Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 5T3
Phone: 687-3404
Fax: 669-9601

LAWYERS *for* Literacy

Flight for Freedom Awards

Canada Post invites people from across Canada to apply for the fourth annual Flight for Freedom Awards.

The national literacy awards "honour the contributions of businesses, literacy organizations, teachers, and individuals to the cause of literacy in Canada."

Previous recipients from B.C. are: Thomas Quigley, a librarian with the Vancouver Public Library who received the Literacy Education Award in 1993; and Ellen Szita, a learner who received the Individual Achievement Award in 1993.

The awards are presented in five categories:

The Governor General's Flight for Freedom Award: Honours a literacy organization showing long-term achievement, innovation, leadership and organizational excellence.

The Government of Canada Literacy Innovation Award: Honours a non-government organization or association showing a high level of commitment, innovation and creativity in integrating literacy into its program or services.

The Corporate Canada Literacy Award: Honours a company that has established a literacy skills upgrading program in its workplace or that has shown leadership in community literacy activities.

The Literacy Education Award: Honours an individual educator for dedication and commitment to literacy.

Individual Achievement Awards: Recognizes an individual who has participated in a workplace or community literacy program and has succeeded in improving his or her literacy skills. The 1996 program has been expanded to include eight regional winners: a francophone and anglophone recipient from each of the four regions of Canada (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, and the West, including the Territories).

This year, Canada Post will offer a cash donation to a literacy organization of each winner's choice. The winners will be announced on September 9, 1996. This year's awards ceremony will also feature the unveiling of a Family Literacy Stamp.

Applications must be received by **July 19, 1996**. For more information, contact:

Flight for Freedom Awards
Canada Post Corporation
Suite N0610 - 2701 Riverside Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0B1
Phone: (613) 734-6398
Fax: (613) 734-8814

Thank You, Donors!

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations who have donated $50 or more to Literacy B.C.:

Alan Dolman
Breen Egan
Deanna Sordi
Dino Sordi

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And to the many people who give donations of up to $50, thank you! We appreciate everyone's support.

Literacy B.C. has received a donation from Matsushita Electric of Canada Ltd. of over $10,000 worth of computer equipment. The equipment includes a Pentium laptop computer with laser printer.

This very generous donation, facilitated by ABC CANADA, was made to five literacy coalitions across the country. We want to thank Matsushita for choosing Literacy B.C. as one of the recipients.

Who We Are

Literacy B.C. was founded in 1990. We are a coalition of people and groups concerned with promoting literacy in B.C.

Our mission is to promote literacy, to support literacy learners, to develop community partnerships, and to present a united voice on literacy. We are supported by the B.C. Ministry of Education, Skills, and Training; the National Literacy Secretariat; memberships; and donations.

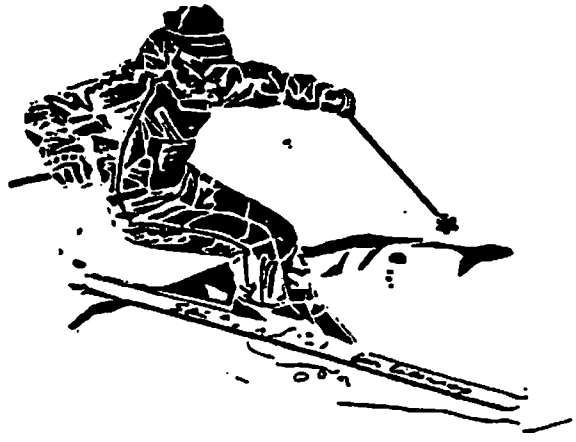
We welcome your news and comments.

You can reach us at:

Literacy B.C.
622 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
Phone: 1-800-663-1293 toll free in B.C.
(604) 684-0624 in the Lower Mainland
Fax: (604) 684-8520
E-mail: literacy_bc@douglas.bc.ca
WWW: http://www.nald.ca/lbc.htm

Donations to Literacy B.C. are tax deductible.

Ski for Literacy '96



We gratefully acknowledge ABC CANADA and our supporters who helped raise over $12,000 for Literacy B.C. at this year's Ski for Literacy.

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Wedgewood Hotel

Our celebrity skiers, our volunteers and all our skiers!!

Thank You!